

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 16 January 1969



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
16 JANUARY 1969

LATE ITEM

Soviet Union

The two Soviet manned spacecraft completed a successful docking operation shortly after 3:00 AM today. There is as yet no word that crewmen have moved from one capsule to the other.

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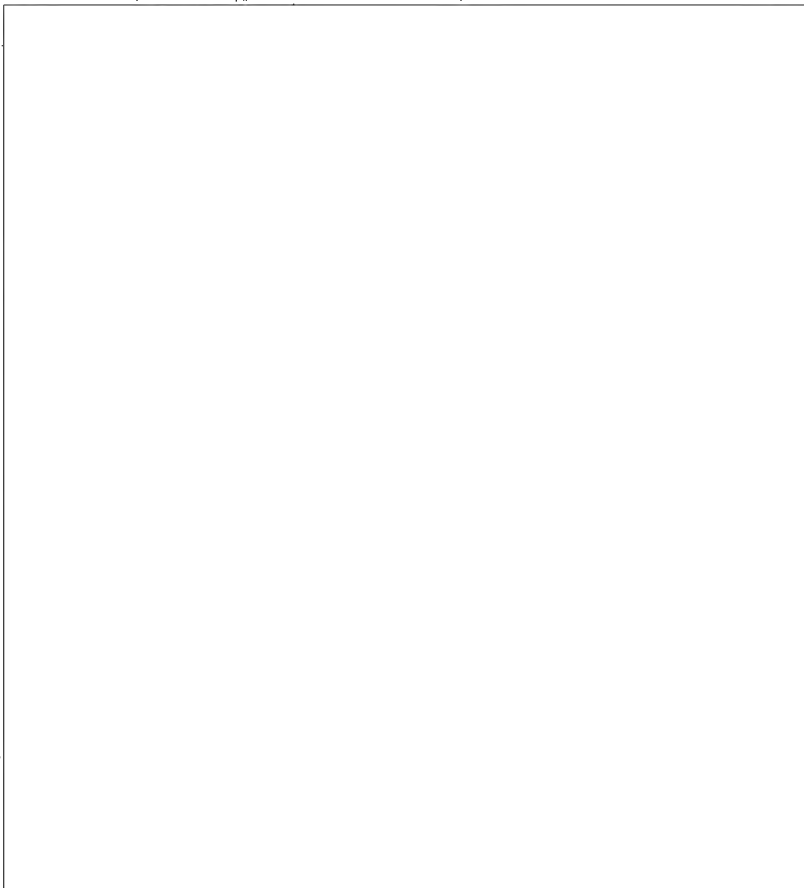
1. Israel

American and other Western attachés report finding no signs of an Israeli buildup for a major military strike. This is the result of air reconnaissance yesterday and attaché visits on the ground throughout the country.

The Arab states, however, continue in a high state of nerves over Israeli intentions.

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2. West Europe



3. United Kingdom

An unexpectedly bad trade picture for December has brought increased pressure against the pound and helped push gold prices to record levels in London. Although the British describe this as due to temporary factors, the key problem was a decline in exports last month.

The December trade figures do not by themselves mean that Britain is losing the battle. Market reaction to the figures points up, however, the increasing urgency of a substantial improvement in Britain's trade performance to prevent overreaction by speculators to temporary setbacks.

4. Brazil

President Costa e Silva hopes Congress can reopen shortly after the first of June--following a purge of the more outspoken opposition congressmen. Similar "housecleanings" are expected in state legislatures before they are allowed to reconvene.

The generals, who forced the President to close Congress last month, will not be pleased even with these weak gestures toward democratic norms--and the President may not get his way.

5. Cuba

The flow of fence jumpers into the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay continues. Nine more refugees have come in since the mass escape of nearly 100 ten days ago. At this rate, the total for 1969 will be far in excess of the 1,005 who fled into the base last year.

6. Colombia

President Lleras faces the prospect of a showdown with organized labor next week. Non-Communist labor leaders have joined Communists in the call for a general strike on Wednesday. Resentment is growing over Lleras' unpopular labor policies and the public is upset over recent hikes in bus fares and utility rates. The President is hard pressed in his effort to get non-Communist labor back on his side.

7. Nigeria

The civil war drags on with no sign of an end to the military stalemate. 50X1

8. United Nations

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Chinese Improve Rail Facilities to North Vietnam: The Chinese are completing extensive transloading facilities to improve a reserve railroad for the delivery of supplies to North Vietnam.

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Recently available satellite photography shows that as of mid-November there were two almost completed yards, incorporating about 16,000 feet of track, to handle transloading operations from standard to meter gauge. The yards are located near Kunming at the junction of the Chinese standard gauge railroad and the meter gauge line from Hanoi. Work on the yards began about mid-1966. Together, the two yards represent facilities about half as large as at Pinghsiang, which serves the primary railroad into North Vietnam.

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Hanoi's Reporting of Harriman Statement: Hanoi Radio's domestic service on 15 January carried a brief item reporting Ambassador Harriman's remarks in

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Paris last Monday. The broadcast said that Harriman "admitted" that the Vietnamese and the American people, as well as the world in general, hoped for peace. It quoted the ambassador as saying that public opinion would encourage efforts aimed at a peaceful solution and his warning against expecting and speaking of a US "victory" in Vietnam.

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Politburo Powwow?: Hoang Van Hoan, the seldom seen China specialist on the North Vietnamese Politburo, showed up at a recent reception in Hanoi for a visiting Communist party delegation, according to a Hanoi broadcast of 14 January. This could be a clue that the leadership is, or has been, engaged in some important policy deliberations. Hoan is believed to have resided in Peking for the last few years and has appeared in North Vietnam only occasionally; the last time was in May for the meeting of the National Assembly. He has not been noted in public since, although he may well have attended secret leadership meetings during recent months.

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Cambodian Air Service to Hanoi: On 14 January a Royal Air Cambodge DC-6 conducted the first flight under the recently reactivated civil air service between North Vietnam and Cambodia. The aircraft flew from Phnom Penh over Laos to Hanoi and on to Canton, thus resuming a service which has been suspended for three years. The flight is to be made every Tuesday and increased to two times a week in March. Future flights will probably be made by a Caravelle recently purchased from France.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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